

Should A Pregnant Woman Get a Flu Shot or other Vaccinations During Pregnancy?

Recommendations for vaccinating pregnant women vary based on the type of vaccine and the way the vaccine creates immunity. Some vaccines are made from “inactivated virus” and some are made from “live-virus”. The live virus vaccines are generally not recommended during pregnancy, because of a possible risk of transmitting the virus to the fetus. After receiving a vaccination of a live virus, a woman is counseled to avoid becoming pregnant for four weeks after the vaccine was given.

However, in certain circumstances the benefits of receiving the vaccine may outweigh the risks and vaccination should be considered. If a woman is at high risk of disease exposure due to her work, travel, or contact with people, the benefits of getting vaccinated likely outweigh the risks of contracting the disease. If she is at low risk of exposure, she may choose to not receive the vaccine or wait until she is no longer pregnant. The following table may be used as a general guide.

Name of Vaccine	Approved for use in Pregnancy?	Additional Information
Influenza (Flu)	Yes	Recommended after 14 th week, but in some circumstances should be given earlier. Nasal flu vaccination is not recommended at any time during pregnancy.
Hepatitis A	Yes	
Hepatitis B	Yes	Can also be given while breastfeeding
Measles (Commonly given with Mumps and Rubella)	NO	Avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination
Mumps (Commonly given with Measles and Rubella)	NO	Avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination
Rubella (German Measles) (Commonly given with Measles and Mumps)	NO	Avoid becoming pregnant for 28 days after vaccination
Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)	———	Safety has not been evaluated
Polio	NO	Should be avoided unless at high risk for exposure
Tetanus/Diphtheria	Yes	If over 10 years since last vaccination should receive booster dose after 14 th week

Varicella (Chickenpox)	NO	Avoid becoming pregnant for one month after vaccination. Effects of vaccine on the fetus are unknown.
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For more information about vaccinating pregnant women and other immunization issues, go to “Guidelines for Vaccinating Pregnant Women” at http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/preg_guide.htm, visit the Utah Immunization Program website at <http://www.immunize-utah.org/index.htm>, talk with your health care provider, or contact the Pregnancy Risk Line at 1-800-822-2229. For more information on pregnancy, breastfeeding and travel go to <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/pregnant.htm>.

Source: Adapted from the “Guidelines for Vaccinating Pregnant Women,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.